

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An RNA for inhibiting expression of a gene of a virus, the RNA comprising a first nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under stringent conditions to a segment of the gene, and a second nucleotide sequence that is complementary to the first nucleotide sequence and hybridizes to the first nucleotide sequence to form a duplex structure.
2. The RNA of claim 1, wherein the first nucleotide sequence and the second nucleotide sequence are on the same strand.
3. The RNA of claim 1, wherein the RNA is a double-stranded RNA.
4. The RNA of claim 1, wherein the first nucleotide sequence is at least 19 nucleotides in length.
5. The RNA of claim 4, wherein the first nucleotide sequence is 19 to 29 nucleotides in length.
6. The RNA of claim 5, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus.
7. The RNA of claim 6, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.
8. The RNA of claim 7, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
9. The RNA of claim 8, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.
10. The RNA of claim 9, wherein the first nucleotide sequence and the second nucleotide sequence are on the same strand.
11. The RNA of claim 1, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus
12. The RNA of claim 11, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.

13. The RNA of claim 12, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
14. The RNA of claim 13, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.
15. The RNA of claim 14, wherein the first nucleotide sequence and the second nucleotide sequence are on the same strand.
16. A DNA vector comprising a nucleic acid that encodes the RNA of claim 1.
17. The DNA vector of claim 16, wherein the first nucleotide sequence is at least 19 nucleotides in length.
18. The DNA vector of claim 17, wherein the first nucleotide sequence is 19 to 29 nucleotides in length.
19. The DNA vector of claim 18, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus
20. The DNA vector of claim 19, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.
21. The DNA vector of claim 20, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
22. The DNA vector of claim 21, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.
23. The DNA vector of claim 16, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus
24. The DNA vector of claim 23, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.

25. The DNA vector of claim 24, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
26. The DNA vector of claim 25, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.
27. A method of reducing the expression of a gene of a virus in a cell, the method comprising introducing into the cell an effective amount of the RNA of claim 1 or a DNA vector containing a nucleic acid encoding the RNA.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus.
29. The method of claim 28, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.
30. The method of claim 29, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
31. The method of claim 30, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.
32. A method of inhibiting the replication of a virus in a cell, the method comprising introducing into the cell an effective amount of the RNA of claim 1 or a DNA vector containing a nucleic acid encoding the RNA.
33. The method of claim 32, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus.
34. The method of claim 33, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.
35. The method of claim 34, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.

37. A method of treating an infection with a virus, the method comprising administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of the RNA of claim 1 or a DNA vector containing a nucleic acid encoding the RNA.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the virus is a hepatitis virus

39. The method of claim 38, wherein the virus is a hepatitis B virus.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the segment contains one of SEQ ID NOs: 1-10.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein the segment contains SEQ ID NO: 3.

42. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the RNA of claim 1 or a DNA vector containing a nucleic acid encoding the RNA, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.